

Check for Understanding Strategies

Formative assessment serves to improve instruction and provide student feedback and which is administered throughout instruction. Students use the results to monitor their own learning; teachers use the results to check for understanding and then to plan their next instructional moves.

Strategy	Description
3-2-1	<p>Option I Students communicate their level of understanding to teacher using their fingers 3-2-1 Scoring Scale A posted scale that can be used either as a quick check with hand or a numerical value for students to self-assess on a written assignment</p> <p>Option II Students consider what they have learned by responding to the following prompt at the end of the lesson: 3: Things that they learned today; 2: Things they want to know more about; and 1: Questions they have. The prompt stimulates student reflection on the lesson and helps to process the learning.</p>
3 minute pause	<p>The Three Minute Pause provides a chance for students to stop, reflect on the concepts and ideas that have just been introduced, make connections to prior knowledge or experience, and seek clarification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I changed my attitude about... • I became more aware of... • I was surprised about... • I felt... • I related to... • I empathized with...
ABC Summaries	Each student in the class is assigned a different letter of the alphabet and they must select a word starting with that letter that is related to the topic being studied.
ABC Whisper	Each student will be asked to reflect on a concept and draw a visual of his/her interpretation. Then they will share their answer with each other in a zigzag pattern within their group.
Analogy Prompt	Periodically, present students with an analogy prompt: (A designated concept, principle, or process) is like _____ because _____.
Choral Response	In response to a cue, all students respond verbally at the same time. The response can be either to answer a question or to repeat something the teacher has said.
Circle, Triangle, Square	(Circle) Something that is still going around in your head (Triangle) Something pointed that stood out in your mind (Square) Something that “Squared” or agreed with your thinking
Clickers	Electronic surveying devices that give instant feedback and data.
Decisions, Decisions Or Four Corners	Given a prompt, class goes to the side (or corner) that corresponds to their opinion on the topic, side share out reasoning, and students are allowed to change sides after discussion.
Entrance/Exit ticket	Each student will be given a ticket to complete before leaving the room answering: What is the most important thing I learned today? What questions do I still have? These tickets can be given to the teacher when exiting the room or upon entering the next day. The teacher uses this information to guide the instruction.
Every Pupil Response	Each student receives a pink and yellow card. Each color represents a specific response. Students raise the card to provide the correct response to a teacher directed question.
Example/Non-Example	Given a concept, students sort or write various examples/non-examples. Given examples / non-examples, students determine concept.

Fill In Your Thoughts	Written check for understanding strategy where students fill the blank. (A simile is a comparison using words such as ____ or ____.)
Flag It	Students use this strategy to help them remember information that is important to them. They will “flag” their ideas on a sticky note or flag die cut...
Formative Pencil–Paper Assessment	Students respond individually to short, pencil–paper formative assessments of skills and knowledge taught in the lesson. Teachers may elect to have students self-correct. The teacher collects assessment results to monitor individual student progress and to inform future instruction. Both student and teacher can quickly assess whether the student acquired the intended knowledge and skills. This is a formative assessment, so a grade is not the intended purpose.
Give One, Get One	Cooperative activity where the students write response to a prompt, meet up with another student and share ideas so that each leaves with something to add to their list.
Handprint	Draw your handprint. In each finger, write one thing you learned today.
Idea Spinner	The teacher creates a spinner market with 4 quadrants and labeled “Predict, Explain, Summarize, Evaluate.” After new material is presented, the teacher spins the spinner and asks students to answer a questions based on the location of the spinner.
Index Card Summaries and Questions	Periodically, distribute index cards and ask students to write on both sides, with these instructions: (Side 1) Based on our study of (<i>unit topic</i>), list a big idea that you understand and word it as a summary statement. (Side 2) Identify something about (<i>unit topic</i>) that you do not yet fully understand and word it as a statement or question.
Inner-Outer Circle	Students form an inner and outer circle facing a partner. The teacher asks a question and the students are given time to respond to their partner. Next, the inner circle rotates one person to the left. The teacher asks another question and the cycle repeats itself.
Journal Reflections / Entry	Students write their reflections on a lesson, such as what they learned, what caused them difficulty, strategies they found helpful, or other lesson-related topics. Students can reflect on and process lessons. By reading student journals, teachers can identify class and individual misconceptions and successes.
Misconception Check	Present students with common or predictable misconceptions about a designated concept, principle, or process. Ask them whether they agree or disagree and explain why. Can also be presented in the form of a multiple-choice or true-false quiz.
One Question Quiz	One specific focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two. Teachers can quickly scan the written responses to assess student understanding.
One Sentence Summary	Students are asked to write a summary sentence that answers the “who, what, where, when, why, how” questions about the topic.
Oral Questioning	<p>Use the following questions and follow-up probes regularly to check for understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is _____ similar to/different from _____? - What are the characteristics/parts of _____? - In what other ways might we show show/illustrate _____? - What is the big idea, key concept, moral in _____? - How does _____ relate to _____? - What ideas/details can you add to _____? - Give an example of _____? - What is wrong with _____? - What might you infer from _____? - What conclusions might be drawn from _____? - What question are we trying to answer? What problem are we trying to solve?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are you assuming about _____? - What might happen if _____? - What criteria would you use to judge/evaluate _____? - What evidence supports _____? - How might we prove/confirm _____? - How might this be viewed from the perspective of _____? - What alternatives should be considered _____? - What approach/strategy could you use to _____?
Portfolio Check	Check the progress of a student's portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of significant work, carefully selected, dated and presented to tell the story of a student's achievement or growth in well-defined areas of performance, such as reading, writing, etc. A portfolio usually includes personal reflections where the student explains why each piece was chosen and what it shows about his/her growing skills and abilities.
Question Box or Board	Establish a location (e.g., question box, bulletin board, or e-mail address) where students may leave or post questions about concepts, principals, or processes that they do not understand. This technique may benefit students who are uncomfortable saying aloud that they do not understand.
Quick Writes	A timed writing in response to a question or prompt (before, during, or after instruction)
Response Cards	Index cards, signs, whiteboards, magnetic boards, or other items are simultaneously held up by all students in class to indicate their response to a question or problem presented by the teacher. Using response devices, the teacher can easily note the responses of individual students while teaching the whole group. Additionally, response cards allow for participation by the whole class and not just a few students who raise their hands.
Self- Assessment	Students collect information about their own learning, analyze what it reveals about their progress toward the intended learning goals and plan the next steps in their learning.
Slap It	Students are divided into two teams to identify correct answers to questions given by the teacher. Students use a fly swatter to slap the correct response posted on the wall.
Socratic Seminar	Students ask questions of one another about an essential question, topic, or selected text. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions. Students learn to formulate questions that address issues to facilitate their own discussion and arrive at a new understanding.
Student Conference	One on one conversation with students to check their level of understanding.
Take and Pass	Cooperative group activity used to share or collect information from each member of the group; students write a response, then pass to the right, add their response to next paper, continue until they get their paper back, then group debriefs.
Think-Pair-Share	Students take a few minutes to think about the question or prompt. Next, they pair with a designated partner to compare thoughts before sharing with the whole class.
Ticket Out the Door	Students write in response to a specific prompt for a short period of time. Teachers collect their responses as a "ticket out the door" to check for students' understanding. This exercise quickly generates multiple ideas that could be turned into longer pieces of writing later.
Visual Representation (Web or Concept Map)	Ask students to create a visual representation (e.g., web, concept map, flow chart, or time line) to show the elements or components of a topic or process. This technique effectively reveals whether students understand the relationships among the elements.

